wherein the encoder is to provide an indication of a currently available live presentation to the search server;

wherein the client computer is to submit a request with search criteria to the search server;

wherein the search server is to,

determine whether the currently available live presentation from the encoder matches the search criteria, and

transmit an identifier of the encoder to the client computer if the currently available live presentation matches the search criteria; and

wherein the encoder is to provide the live presentation to the client computer.

2. (Amended) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoder is further to provide a subsequent indication to the search server indicating that the live presentation is finished.

3. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoder further provides to the search server, during the live presentation, information identifying current characteristics of the live presentation.

4. A system as recited in claim 3, wherein:

the search server is further to transmit the information identifying current characteristics of the live presentation to the client computer; and

the client computer is further to display the information identifying current characteristics of the live presentation.

5. (Amended) A system as recited in claim 3, wherein:

the information identifying current characteristics comprises a topic description; and

the encoder provides a characteristics finished indication to the search server when the topic identified by the topic description is no longer being presented.

6. A system as recited in claim 3, wherein the information identifying the current characteristics comprises text corresponding to the live presentation.

7. A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the live presentation comprises an audio/video streaming media presentation.

8. (Amended) A system comprising:

a search server;

an encoder configured to provide an indication of a currently available live presentation to the search server;

a client computer configured to submit a request with search criteria to the search server, the search server being configured to determine whether the currently available live presentation from the encoder matches the search criteria,

and transmit an identifier of the encoder to the client computer when the currently available live presentation matches the search criteria;

wherein the encoder is configured to provide the live presentation to the client computer, and wherein the search server is further configured to:

maintain a record of user search requests; and

notify the corresponding user when a new live presentation becomes available that satisfies a search request.

9. (Amended) A method comprising:

sending, to a search server, information identifying a live presentation available via a network at the beginning of the live presentation; and

identifying, to the search server, when the live presentation is no longer available via the network.

10. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the identifying comprises sending, to the search server, an indication of the duration of the live presentation.

11. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the identifying comprises sending, to the search server, an indication of when the live presentation has ended.

12. A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising sending, to the search server, an identifier of an encoder from which the live presentation can be obtained.

13. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the sending the identifier comprises sending, as the identifier, a uniform resource locator (URL).

14. A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising identifying, to the search server, information indicating characteristics of a part of the live presentation currently being presented.

15. A method as recited in claim 14, wherein the identifying information includes sending, to the search server, an indication of the duration of the characteristics.

16. A method comprising:

sending, to a search server, information identifying a live presentation available via a network at the beginning of the live presentation; and

identifying, to the search server, when the live presentation is no longer available via the network, further comprising:

identifying, to the search server, information indicating characteristics of a part of the live presentation currently being presented, wherein the identifying information includes sending, to the search server, an indication of the duration of the characteristics, and wherein the identifying information comprises:

sending, to the search server, an indication of the characteristics when the current characteristics begin to describe the live presentation; and

sending, to the search server, a characteristics finished indication when the current characteristics no longer describe the live presentation.

17.   (Amended)   A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising generating the information identifying the live presentation as the live presentation is presented via the network.

18. (Amended) A method comprising:

sending, to a search server, information identifying a live presentation available via a network at the beginning of the live presentation; and

identifying, to the search server, when the live presentation is no longer available via the network, further comprising generating the information identifying the live presentation as the live presentation is presented via the network, wherein the generating comprises identifying key words as the live presentation is presented.

19. (Amended) A method comprising:

sending, to a search server, information identifying a live presentation available via a network at the beginning of the live presentation; and

identifying, to the search server, when the live presentation is no longer available via the network, further comprising using closed captioning data as the information identifying the live presentation.

20.   A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the live presentation comprises a composite media stream having an audio stream and a video stream.

21.   One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 9.

22.   A method comprising:

receiving information identifying a live presentation; and

making the information available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation.

23.   A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the receiving comprises receiving information identifying a live presentation scheduled to occur in the future.

24.   A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the receiving comprises receiving information identifying a currently available live presentation.

25.   A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

receiving information identifying a plurality of live presentations; and

for each live presentation, making the information identifying the live presentation available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation.

26. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information identifying a live presentation; and

making the information available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation, and further comprising:

receiving information identifying a plurality of live presentations;

for each live presentation, making the information identifying the live presentation available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation;

maintaining a record of user search requests; and

notifying the corresponding user when a new live presentation that satisfies a search request is available.

27.   A method as recited in claim 26, further comprising:

receiving, for each of the user search requests, an indication of how the user should be notified; and

notifying the user in accordance with the notification.

28.   A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the receiving comprises receiving the information from a same encoder as is presenting the information.

29. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information identifying a live presentation; and

making the information available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation, wherein the making the information available for searching comprises:

adding the information to a database of currently available live presentations; and

deleting the information from the database when the live presentation has ended.

30.   A method as recited in claim 29, further comprising:

receiving a user search request; and

accessing the database of currently available live presentations to determine whether a currently available live presentation matches the user search request.

31.   (Amended)   A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising receiving an indication, from an encoder that is presenting the information, that the live presentation is finished.

32.   A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

receiving information identifying a current characteristic of the live presentation; and

making the current characteristic available for searching for as long as the characteristic describes a currently presenting portion of the live presentation.

33. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information identifying a live presentation;

making the information available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation;

receiving information identifying a current characteristic of the live presentation; and

making the current characteristic available for searching for as long as the characteristic describes a currently presenting portion of the live presentation, wherein the making the current characteristic available for searching comprises:

adding the information identifying the current characteristic to a database of currently available live presentations; and

deleting the information identifying the current characteristic from the database when the characteristic no longer describes the currently presenting portion of the live presentation.

34. (Amended) A method comprising:

receiving information identifying a live presentation;

making the information available for searching only for the duration of the live presentation;

receiving information identifying a current characteristic of the live presentation; and

making the current characteristic available for searching for as long as the characteristic describes a currently presenting portion of the live presentation, and further comprising:

maintaining a record of user search requests; and

alerting a corresponding user when a new current characteristic that satisfies a search request describes the currently presenting portion of the live presentation.

35.   A method as recited in claim 33, further comprising:

receiving a user search request; and

checking the database of currently available live presentations to determine, based at least in part on the current characteristic in the database, whether a currently available live presentation matches the user search request.

36.   A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

receiving information identifying a current characteristic of the live presentation; and

transmitting the information identifying the current characteristic of the live presentation to a client computer.

37.   A method as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

generating, based at least in part on the information identifying the live presentation, descriptive information corresponding to the live presentation; and

adding the descriptive information to a database of currently available live presentations.

38.   A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the live presentation includes an audio stream and a video stream.

39.   One or more computer-readable memories containing a computer program that is executable by a processor to perform the method recited in claim 22.

40.   One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform functions including:

identifying topic information corresponding to live content, the topic information identifying a current topic of the live content; and

transmitting the topic information to a server to make the topic information available for searching.

41.   One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 40, wherein the transmitting comprises transmitting the topic information to a search server.

42.   (Amended)   One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform functions including:

identifying topic information corresponding to live content, the topic information identifying a current topic of the live content; and

transmitting the topic information to a server to make the topic information available for searching, wherein the transmitting comprises transmitting the topic information to an encoder.

43. (Amended) One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform functions including:

identifying topic information corresponding to live content, the topic information identifying a current topic of the live content; and

transmitting the topic information to a server to make the topic information available for searching, further comprising transmitting a topic finished indication to the server when the topic information is no longer the current topic.

44. (Amended) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43, wherein the transmitting the topic finished indication comprises transmitting, as the topic finished indication, a cancel topic indicator.

45. (Amended) One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 43, wherein the transmitting the topic finished indication comprises transmitting, as the topic finished indication, new current topic information.

46. An apparatus comprising:

a bus;

a processor coupled to the bus; and

a memory, coupled to the bus, to store a plurality of instructions that are executed by the processor, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, cause the processor to,

receive information identifying live content,

maintain the information for as long as the live content is available, and

use the information to respond to searches from a plurality of client computers.

47.   An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the instructions to receive information identifying live content are to receive information identifying live content available from an encoder at the time the information is received.

48.   An apparatus as recited in claim 46, further comprising a nonvolatile storage device, coupled to the bus, to record the information identifying live content.

49.   An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to store the information identifying live content in the memory.

50.   An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the information identifying live content includes a set of descriptive words and an indicator of a server from which the live content is available.

51.   An apparatus as recited in claim 50, wherein the indicator of the server comprises a uniform resource locator (URL).

52.   An apparatus as recited in claim 46, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to:

receive information identifying current characteristics of the live content;

maintain the information identifying the current characteristics for as long as the characteristics describe the live content; and

use the information identifying the current characteristics to respond to searches from the plurality of client computers.

53. (Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a bus;

a processor coupled to the bus; and

a memory, coupled to the bus, to store a plurality of instructions that are executed by the processor, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, cause the processor to,

receive information identifying live content,

maintain the information for as long as the live content is available, and

use the information to respond to searches from a plurality of client computers, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to:

receive information identifying current topic information identifying a topic currently being presented as part of the live content;

receive an indication that the topic is no longer being presented;

maintaining the topic information for a period of time after receiving the indication that the topic is no longer being presented; and

using the current topic information to respond to searches from the plurality of computers during the period of time.

54. (Amended) An apparatus comprising:

a bus;

a processor coupled to the bus; and

a memory, coupled to the bus, to store a plurality of instructions that are executed by the processor, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, cause the processor to,

receive information identifying live content,

maintain the information for as long as the live content is available, and

use the information to respond to searches from a plurality of client computers, wherein the plurality of instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to generate, based on the information identifying live content, descriptive information to be added to a database of live content.

55. A method comprising:

identifying a set of search criteria to be compared to information describing a plurality of live presentations;

transmitting the set of search criteria to a server; and

receiving a list of live presentations currently in progress that match the search criteria.

56.   A method as recited in claim 55, further comprising:

selecting a live presentation from the list of live presentations; and

requesting that the selected live presentation be transmitted to a client computer corresponding to a user making the selection.

57. (Amended) A method comprising:

identifying a set of search criteria to be compared to information describing a plurality of live presentations;

transmitting the set of search criteria to a server; and

receiving a list of live presentations currently in progress that match the search criteria, and further comprising:

transmitting a notification type to the server that indicates how a user that identifies the set of search criteria should be notified by the server when a live presentation is determined by the server to match the search criteria.